

# Transcript of the Testimony of

**Date:** January 16, 2018

**Case:** THE COMMUNITY MEETING NO. 2 - OF THE  
PROPOSED CO-LOCATION OF ART IN MOTION CHARTER  
SCHOOL AND EMIL G. HIRSCH METROPOLITAN HIGH  
SCHOOL

**TOOMEY REPORTING**

COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018  
COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.

HELD AT EMIL G. HIRSCH METROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOL  
7740 SOUTH INGLESIDE AVENUE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

IN RE: FOR THE PROPOSED CO-LOCATION OF ART IN MOTION  
CHARTER SCHOOL WITH EMIL G. HIRSCH METROPOLITAN  
HIGH SCHOOL

The record of proceedings had in the  
meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken before  
ROBBIN M. OCHENKOWSKI, a Certified Shorthand Reporter  
and Notary Public in and for the County of Cook and  
State of Illinois, at 7740 Ingleside Avenue, Chicago,  
Illinois, January 16th, 2018, at 6:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MS. KAREN SAFFOLD, Facilitator

MS. MARY BRADLEY, Executive Director of Innovation  
and Incubation

MR. CHASDA MARTIN, Leadership and Learning  
Family Community Engagement

MS. ELISA BOTELLO, Office of Innovation and  
Incubation

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1 MS. SAFFOLD: Welcome, Everyone. I would like to  
2 thank everyone for coming out to speak with us this  
3 evening. Good evening. I'm going to wait for everyone  
4 to come on in so we can get started.

5 This meeting is part of a proposed co-location  
6 of Art In Motion Charter School with Hirsch High School  
7 which was formerly proposed on December 1st, 2017.

8 My name is Karen Saffold, and I am the  
9 facilitator for Chicago Public Schools. I'm here with  
10 Mary Bradley, who is executive director of the Office of  
11 Innovation and Incubation.

12 We're here today on behalf of our acting chief  
13 Dr. Janice Jackson to share some basic information and  
14 hear from you about the specific proposal.

15 I'd also like to introduce some people in the  
16 audience who are here to assist you. We have Amy Weeks.

17 Please raise your hand, Amy.

18 MS. WEEKS: (Indicating.)

19 MS. SAFFOLD: And Shontell Smith, Office of Diverse  
20 Learners, and Marcellus Summers from --

21 Where is Marcellus? Is she here?

22 MS. SUMMERS: (Indicating.)

23 MS. SAFFOLD: -- from the Office of Temporary Living  
24 Situations.

1           As I mentioned a moment ago, the purpose of  
2 this meeting is to allow CEO Jackson and the Board  
3 office to hear feedback from you about the specific  
4 proposals under discussion.

5           I will start by running through a brief  
6 introduction and logistics. Next Mary Bradley will run  
7 through a brief presentation providing information to  
8 the proposed action.

9           After this we will allot the remaining time for  
10 public comment. The meeting will end promptly at 8:00  
11 p.m.

12           As I mentioned earlier, my name is  
13 Karen Saffold. And I will be facilitating the meeting  
14 during the public comment section. My colleague  
15 Mary Bradley will lead the presentation section.

16           In addition, we will have representatives at  
17 the resource table in the back if you have any  
18 questions. These representatives will be available  
19 for 30 minutes after the conclusion of the community  
20 meeting to answer any questions you may have specific to  
21 the area of expertise.

22           Please note these tables are not formally part  
23 of the community meeting, and the court reporter and  
24 notetaker will not be present during this time. That's

1 Line 3.

2 The community meeting will take place over the  
3 course of two hours. Our goal is to provide a brief  
4 presentation of the proposed action followed by time for  
5 public comment.

6 If you did not have an opportunity to make a  
7 comment, you are certainly encouraged to e-mail  
8 transitions@cps.edu. You could also submit a written  
9 document at the registration table in the back. A staff  
10 member at the desk will help you and also provide new  
11 cards if you have any additional concerns.

12 This meeting is from a broad timeline regarding  
13 the proposed action. As part of this process, CPS began  
14 by publishing draft guidelines for school actions on  
15 October 1st, then followed up and announced proposed  
16 school actions on December 1st. This followed up with  
17 months of community engagement and input.

18 Following this announcement, CPS will host two  
19 community meetings and one public hearing to gather  
20 additional public feedback.

21 After the meeting and feedback, we will review  
22 all input. After, the CEO Jackson may make a  
23 recommendation to the Board of Ed to vote on the  
24 proposed action.

1           Following a potential recommendation, the Board  
2 will vote on whether or not an approved proposed action  
3 at the February board meeting.

4           Now I'm going to pass the mic over to my  
5 colleague Mary Bradley, and she is going to run through  
6 a brief presentation of the school action.

7           MS. BRADLEY: Thank you, Karen.

8           And good evening, and thank you all for being  
9 here. And on behalf of myself and all the colleagues  
10 from CPS here, we really appreciate your feedback both  
11 from the last community meeting and tonight.

12           In December of 2017, the  
13 Board -- the Chicago Board of Education approved a new  
14 charter school, Art In Motion Charter School, to open in  
15 the fall of 2018 at a location to be determined.

16           Art In Motion, otherwise known as AIM,  
17 is authorized to open in the fall of 2018 with Grades 7  
18 through 8 and will grow one grade per year until it  
19 serves Grades 7 through 12.

20           AIM is a performing arts middle and high school  
21 with a project base in personalized learning curriculum.  
22 They have established community partnerships with  
23 organizations such as New Life and the Lynn Group and  
24 anticipate on leveraging those partnerships to benefit



1 both AIM and the Hirsch High School communities.

2 Through the new school selection process,  
3 Art In Motion conducted community meetings in and around  
4 the surrounding Hirsch and Greater Grand Crossing  
5 communities.

6 Community engagement has occurred through  
7 various different activities, including community  
8 meetings, events and aldermanic supports.

9 Additionally, the District conducted its own  
10 public hearing on November 6th, 2017, to assess  
11 community engagement and supports.

12 The proposed co-location supports the need for  
13 qualities in the Greater Grand Crossing community and  
14 provides an opportunity for cross school collaboration  
15 and leveraging partnerships to serve students in both  
16 the AIM and Hirsch community.

17 There are over 3000 students within a  
18 three-mile radius of Hirsch, and 45 percent of those  
19 students attend a school outside of that three-mile  
20 radius.

21 Although AIM and Hirsch are two different  
22 school models, their collaborative partnerships,  
23 co-sharing benefits extended -- extend past sharing the  
24 facility and provide supports such as shared teacher

1 professional development, student and family services,  
2 afterschool programming.

3 The existing Hirsch facility provides common  
4 areas including the cafeteria and gymnasiums for both  
5 schools to use. The student enrollment of both schools  
6 would not exceed the Hirsch building capacity.

7 I will now pass it back to my colleague  
8 Dr. Karen Saffold to facilitate the public comment  
9 section.

10 MS. SAFFOLD: So before we get started on the public  
11 comment section, I want to go over a few logistics and  
12 guidelines.

13 So prior to the public's participation, we  
14 would like the opportunity for city, state and federal  
15 elected officials to speak.

16 During public participation, each speaker that  
17 has signed up will have an opportunity to speak for two  
18 minutes to share his or her thoughts. You'll get a  
19 warning after one minute and then 30 seconds after that.

20 Speakers must remain at the podium, and please  
21 do not walk around with the mic.

22 Remember, the purpose of the meeting is to hear  
23 from those that are in attendance. And we have a court  
24 reporter. So please make sure you say your first and

1 last name so the court reporter will be able to report  
2 your name.

3 The meeting is scheduled to end 8:00 o'clock  
4 p.m, and, again, the public is able to submit comments  
5 at transitions@cps.edu.

6 If there is remaining time after elected  
7 officials and registered guests have spoken, we will  
8 allow participants to come back and speak again.

9 Please remember to start your comments with  
10 your first and your last name and your affiliation to  
11 the school.

12 Again, if you did not have a chance to comment,  
13 you will have an opportunity to do so via  
14 transitions.cps.edu.

15 As I said earlier there are representative in  
16 the back to answer any questions that you may have.  
17 Again, there's notecards for you as well.

18 At this time I'd like to introduce our  
19 Principal Larry Varn from Hirsch to see if he would like  
20 to say anything.

21 If not, please stand up so we can acknowledge  
22 the principal.

23 MR. VARN: (Indicating.)

24 MS. SUMMERS: The first speaker that I see on the

1 list to speak this evening is Michael Brunson. He's  
2 recording secretary for CTU.

3 Mr. Brunson.

4 MR. BRUNSON: Good afternoon, Everyone, or good  
5 evening, I should say.

6 My name is Michael Brunson. I'm reporting  
7 secretary of the Chicago Teachers Union, and I'm sure  
8 you know by now that we are opposed to this so-called  
9 co-location just as we are opposed to closing the  
10 schools in Englewood and not even providing them with  
11 something new.

12 I came and spoke before, and I really don't  
13 need to repeat what I said earlier, but I see a lot of  
14 people here that were not here at the first meeting last  
15 week so I just want to say this.

16 When we're talking about charter schools, the  
17 money flows to the top. You might have a school coming  
18 in, and what is it, Arts in Motion, but they're just one  
19 in a bigger wheel, and they fall under Distinctive  
20 Schools.

21 And I think I see some people from Distinctive  
22 Schools here again. I wonder why last time there were  
23 more people here from Distinctive Schools, which is the  
24 big charter at the top that has a lot of problems, and

1 that I'm not going to go through because I'm not going  
2 take up anybody's time.

3 I spoke to the board on December 6th in detail,  
4 pretty much detailed the problems that we have with  
5 Distinctive Schools because they have a history, they  
6 have a very questionable history that showed that they  
7 are not here for the benefit of the students, and my  
8 great concern is because they have a history of, I won't  
9 say corruption, I won't say scandal, I'll just say they  
10 have a questionable history that you need look into, and  
11 I'm going to make sure that it's published out there.  
12 I'm looking for more information about them.

13 But I'm concerned about Chicago Public Schools  
14 in doing another unnecessary scandal by dealing with  
15 questionable operators. We did with the scandal  
16 selective enrollment school back in 2009, we went  
17 through a scandal with one of our -- with our CEO back  
18 in 2015 and this whole thing that's being said of  
19 Distinctive Schools, and I'm telling you right now, it's  
20 going to come out sooner or later. Why should we have  
21 to go through this?

22 Now, here's the biggest problem that I have.  
23 They say they're going to put this charter school in  
24 here and it's going to co-locate, and according to this

1 co-location plan, they're going to start out with 200  
2 students and eventually move up to 900 students.

3 The capacity of this school, of  
4 Hirsch Metropolitan High School is 1100 students. So if  
5 they're eventually going up to 900, that's not  
6 co-location. That's a slow motion takeover. You need  
7 to look at it like it is, okay?

8 Secondly, why do you want to put two different  
9 schools in one building to begin with? You know, you're  
10 going to have one over here and getting all the  
11 resources and the other one over here draining  
12 resources. That's segregation. And segregation has  
13 never worked for black people, understand that,  
14 segregation does not work for black people. So you need  
15 to push back against that.

16 And you're going to see what I'm talking about  
17 because I'm sure Distinctive Schools is going to get up  
18 here talking, and you just look to see who comes up  
19 speaking.

20 But, anyway, I want to tell you we are here  
21 talking to each other really because Chicago Public  
22 Schools and the Board of Education, they're just here  
23 taking notes. They're not going to answer any  
24 questions. They're not going to respond to any

1 concerns. They're just going to let us just talk to  
2 each other.

3 The big meeting is the one that's going to be  
4 down at the Board of Education, I believe. I don't know  
5 what the date of that is if somebody can say the date of  
6 that. That's the one where I think all the parents of  
7 the students of Hirsch Metropolitan High School, you  
8 need to be at that meeting, you need to make your voice  
9 heard because this high school has been here for years,  
10 it's part of this community, and all it needs is the  
11 support of your community but mostly the support of  
12 Chicago Public Schools.

13 Why are they supporting a segregation policy  
14 right here in their own schools? You have to question  
15 things like that. You have to question what is the true  
16 motive behind it because, if there is a problem here  
17 with Hirsch, there's a problem with resources, not with  
18 their ability to function as a well performing school,  
19 resources.

20 And if this other group wants to come in and,  
21 out of their magnanimous generosity, help this community  
22 and help this school, then contribute to the resources,  
23 don't take it over, you don't got to do that, because  
24 that ain't about generosity, it ain't about love.

1           And when you bring these new teachers in, I  
2 know the first thing I'm going to have to do if this  
3 thing goes through. I'm going to pull all the salaries  
4 because a worker is worthy, and, you know, those charter  
5 schools, they don't treat them right, they have low  
6 salaries, they have no benefits, they don't look out for  
7 your retirement security and they definitely don't have  
8 any voice in educational environment.

9           So I'll be here for a while standing and  
10 talking to each other like I said. Hopefully, someone  
11 is to see you through CPS, and you should be demanding  
12 that the transcripts not just from this meeting but from  
13 all of these meetings be posted online because somebody  
14 is taking notes up there. We should be able to review  
15 these transcripts, find out who's doing all of this  
16 speaking, and you know where I come from, find out where  
17 everybody comes from and who they represent.

18           Thank you so much for your time.

19           MS. SAFFOLD: Thank you.

20           Will Speakers 1 through 5 come up to the podium  
21 at this time?

22           We also have a Spanish interpreter in the  
23 house.

24           Julie, will you please stand up, She has a pink



1 shirt on.

2 She is here in case you need someone.

3 Please, you have two minutes, and then we'll  
4 have someone that will hold up a card after one minute.  
5 Thank you.

6 Please state your first, last name and  
7 affiliation to Hirsch, first and last name, along with  
8 your affiliation to Hirsch.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. SMITH: Hello, Everyone. I'm Jocelyn Smith.  
11 I'm a singer here at Hirsch, and I just have two  
12 questions.

13 My first question is; why haven't we seen you  
14 all before now? And my second question is; why haven't  
15 you all helped us in four years?

16 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is your  
17 question?

18 MS. SMITH: My first question is; why haven't we  
19 seen you guys before now? And my second question is;  
20 why haven't you all helped us in four years?

21 And the reason I ask this is because here at  
22 Hirsch, our students, we like our school, and to me,  
23 honestly, putting another school with another school,  
24 younger kids watch older kids' actions, and you may know

1 they're not like -- some parents may not agree with what  
2 they may be seeing so I don't feel that underclassmen  
3 should be commanded with upperclassmen or with the  
4 schools. That's why I came here in the first place;  
5 because that was the situation at DuSable, Prague.

6 MR. MARTIN: So we're going to ask Speakers 2  
7 through 5, please start making your way up to the stage  
8 and say your name nice and clearly when you get up.

9 Jessica Story, Number 3 we have Alliya Alston.  
10 So your cards tell you which number you have. We'll get  
11 to you. So your cards say which number you have. If  
12 you have Speakers 1 through 5, come up, stick to two  
13 minutes.

14 Your timekeeper, will you raise your hand, sir?

15 THE TIMEKEEPER: (Indicating.)

16 MR. MARTIN: -- he will hold your time card, okay?

17 MS. STORY: Good evening. I'm Jessica Story, and  
18 I'm a teacher at Distinctive Schools. I have been with  
19 Distinctive schools for -- this will be my fourth year  
20 with Distinctive Schools.

21 So I guess I'm here to stand in front of you  
22 today to talk to you about two perspectives, one from a  
23 parent perspective.

24 As a parent of a young child who is very

1 involved in arts, in dance and technology and things  
2 like that, we reside on the south side of Chicago, and,  
3 unfortunately, we have to do a lot of traveling to get  
4 her to programs like that that she's really interested  
5 in.

6 As a parent, as a working parent, that's very  
7 difficult for me to do on days when I have 29 other  
8 students that are in my classroom from a significant  
9 period of time.

10 I just think back when I was her age and the  
11 few resources that were available for me so  
12 participating in things that I enjoyed doing. So I  
13 think that this -- this merge together, because we want  
14 to embrace it as just not splitting, we want to come  
15 together and embrace this opportunity for our Hirsch to  
16 get the same resources that all schools are getting  
17 within our community.

18 We want to make sure that our students feel  
19 safe in this merge, we want to make sure our students  
20 feel trust in this merge that we are here to support the  
21 students, the families of the community as well.

22 So just from a parent perspective, I just want  
23 to make sure that we do want our children to be active,  
24 we want them to be engaged, we want to make sure they're

1 involved in things to keep them off the street. We do  
2 know where we live, we do know the things going around  
3 us, and I think Distinctive and AIM is a good source to  
4 bring to our school to help brighten our school and  
5 bring more things for opportunities to our students that  
6 they love doing because the goal is to do things that we  
7 want the students to do.

8 You know, it's about the students, it's not  
9 about the teachers, it's not about the staff, it's not  
10 about the parents. It's about the students. We want to  
11 make sure we are faithful to them.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. ALSTON: Hello, my name is Alliya Alston, and  
14 I'm a junior at Hirsch Metropolitan High School.

15 Hirsch High School might seem like a bad  
16 school, but it really isn't. It isn't. The school that  
17 every time when we ask for supports, they always say we  
18 don't have money. But my question is; the church  
19 claimed that they gave us money, but where's the money?

20 We just need -- Why do we need another school  
21 upstairs than by the years they're just taking over?

22 All you all are doing to us is making it bad  
23 for us. Why are you kicking us out of the school we  
24 have? Where are we going to go?

1           If you all kick us out of our school, then,  
2 well, there will be a lot of dropouts, and maybe some of  
3 us will even lose our education. Some of us might even  
4 be dead out in the street because we need our education.

5           MS. LEONARD: Hi, my name is Adrienne Leonard, and  
6 I'm a staff member at Distinctive Schools, but I'm here  
7 to talk to you today about how performing arts can  
8 really impact someone's experience to really develop  
9 their skills while they're in high school to prepare  
10 them for college and to prepare them for a career after  
11 that.

12           So I'm going to tell you a little story. In  
13 1978 my parents moved to Chicago from another country  
14 because they had hopes to achieve more in the U.S., and  
15 they chose Chicago because they loved the community that  
16 they saw here.

17           Soon after that they had my brother and I, and  
18 so we started school. We had great experiences in  
19 elementary and middle school, but where I really started  
20 to develop into more of a person that I am today is in  
21 high school, and that was through performing arts.

22           When I was in high school, I began to really  
23 love dance, and I began to really love music, and I took  
24 voice lessons, I joined choir, I was able to connect

1 with so many other students through that as well as  
2 talking to them about math and other skills, too.

3 Then in my senior year, I had one of the dream  
4 experiences of my life. I was Wendy in Peter Pan, and  
5 it was something I'll always remember for a lifetime.

6 But then that senior year, I think about what  
7 did I want to do when I got to college. So when I got  
8 to college, I decided to major in communications, media  
9 and performing arts, and I am proud to say I have  
10 graduated from Illinois University in Chicago, and it's  
11 one of those ethnically diverse campuses in the U.S.  
12 With that I was able to find a job.

13 Pretty soon after college I was aware I had a  
14 lot of skills through performing arts. Performing arts  
15 taught me a list to collaborate with other people, with  
16 groups as well as work independently. It also taught me  
17 how to read because I came from a family where English  
18 was a second language. It taught me how to have fun,  
19 how to make friends, how to collaborate and also have a  
20 lot of confidence in myself. And if I didn't have any  
21 of the confidence in myself, I might not have had the  
22 courage to stand here today.

23 So today I'm proud to say that it's been over  
24 ten years since I've graduated college, and I'm still

1 taking skills with me, and I hope that you could see  
2 that for the future of AIM as well.

3 MR. MARTIN: Asia, it looks like Asia Gaston,  
4 Asia Gaston, going once, going twice.

5 Speaker 6 through 10, please make your way up  
6 front, please. 6 through 10, Babita Glossett.

7 MR. GLOSSETT: So hi. I'm with Distinctive Schools.

8 First off, thank you. That was an amazing  
9 pronunciation of my name, probably one of the best. So  
10 I appreciate it.

11 I'm here representing Distinctive Schools and  
12 providing additional information around Distinctive  
13 Schools and what it's like to be a member of the  
14 Distinctive Schools' family.

15 I joined Distinctive Schools this summer. And  
16 one of the reasons I joined Distinctive Schools is I see  
17 other members of Distinctive Schools out in the crowd  
18 because of what Distinctive Schools stands for and  
19 because of the commission of Distinctive Schools and  
20 what we -- what we strive for every single day; that we  
21 work with our -- our students and our families in our  
22 communities that we serve.

23 Tonight we're going to hear a lot of different  
24 sides, a lot of information from different sides, a lot

1 of perspectives. And one of the things I'd like to  
2 remind us of is that, in this wonderful democracy, we  
3 are able to share our opinions, share our beliefs and  
4 share how we feel and share information.

5 So what I'd like to share is the pride that I  
6 feel in Distinctive Schools. A previous speaker  
7 mentioned generosity and love. I think generosity and  
8 love are two things that Distinctive Schools truly  
9 stands for. Distinctive Schools is an organization that  
10 really takes care of its members, of its family members  
11 and really takes care of the students and the staff as  
12 well.

13 So I stand up here as a proud member of  
14 Distinctive Schools in full support of Arts in Motion.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. GOLEY: Good afternoon. My name is  
17 Marcus Goley. And I come up here today because I have a  
18 question asking why is there another school at our  
19 school? Why can't it be out of the kindness one can  
20 rejuvenate Hirsch, and why?

21 I mean, we don't need another school. We need  
22 more funding. We're underfunded.

23 I've seen only one organization, and that's  
24 basketball. We don't have any clubs, anything to do.



1 We as a school are just underfunded. We have no kids,  
2 but they're bringing in more kids that are slowly going  
3 to start pushing us out of our own school, and for  
4 Hirsch, this is their last stop. Some kids don't have  
5 anywhere else to go. This is their neighborhood school.

6 And when the students start coming in as the  
7 years go by, the students won't have anywhere else to  
8 go. They'll be out on the street with nowhere to go,  
9 they'll be uneducated while the others, they just have a  
10 clear advantage when they come in here. They're going  
11 to come in here with their preppy ties, they're just  
12 going to have all the advantages that we don't have.  
13 They'll have more updated education, more clubs, more  
14 advantages, and I just don't understand that.

15 And that's what I really wanted to ask.

16 MS. KELLY: Good evening, Everyone. My name is  
17 Virginia Kelly. I'm on the staff member with  
18 Distinctive Schools. I've been with the Distinctive  
19 Schools network for four years now. I originally began  
20 as a third crew sixth grade reading teacher and then  
21 compete to the level of my craft and move to the  
22 instructional coach role.

23 So one of the things that attracted me to  
24 Distinctive Schools is their personalized model, which

1 clarified my approach is it's tailored to meet the needs  
2 of students and where they currently are. This is  
3 something that I was not seeing in my previous  
4 placements and previous schools that I was currently in  
5 prior to coming to Distinctive Schools. A lot of that  
6 was a one-sized fit.

7 Typically in a classroom, we have students  
8 coming to us from various backgrounds, different  
9 learning styles, they have different ways in which  
10 they're learning academic abilities, and it's difficult  
11 to meet them where they're at, and we're not tapping  
12 into the resources and the things that they have  
13 available to them.

14 So when I came to Distinctive Schools, I was  
15 able to then incorporate those types of things into the  
16 classrooms. My first year within a network, I was able  
17 to send sixth grade students to college. What we did  
18 was, we went there, and students were able to tap into  
19 things that they wanted to do in life. I was able to  
20 see what were some of the professions that they wanted  
21 more experience with, more knowledge with. They were  
22 able to go to these classes and have those experiences.  
23 This was some of the most lasting impressions that I  
24 had. Those students then graduated, had graduated last

1 year, but this was something they talked about  
2 constantly. They did not have exposure to those things.  
3 They did not know what it was they wanted to do, and  
4 this gave them the ability to have some experience  
5 outside of the classrooms.

6 So as we move forward a partnership, keeping in  
7 mind that the students are always at the forefront with  
8 Distinctive Schools, all we want to meet is where you're  
9 at and progressing to help them get where they're going  
10 to go.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. HILL: Good evening. My name is Sam Hill. I'm  
13 not affiliated with either Hirsch or Distinctive  
14 Schools. I'm a former high school, one of the All  
15 American, played college ball at Iowa State University  
16 as well as Dallas Mavericks.

17 The reason I wanted to come up and speak is  
18 just to voice my opinion. At the end of the day, it's  
19 not about me, it's not about you, it's about these young  
20 adults that we're trying to service. So if you all  
21 could just kind of stick together.

22 And when I grew up, I grew up in Uptown, and  
23 the school that I was slated to go to was Sidd High  
24 School, but my mother did not want me to go to Sidd

1 because all my buddies did. So there wasn't a lot of  
2 choices at that time. So I ended up going to  
3 Amundsen High School, which was on the other side. And  
4 I learned from it.

5 Every kid learns at a different pace, and if  
6 there's an alternative way of educating our kids, I  
7 don't think there's nothing wrong with it because every  
8 parent knows what's best for his or her child so if we  
9 can, offer different alternatives.

10 But at the same time let's understand what  
11 we're here for. We're not here or we shouldn't be here  
12 fighting against each other. It's not about me. It's  
13 not about someone else. It's about these kids.

14 I always say I've been on television over a  
15 thousand times so I don't have to be on television.  
16 It's not about me.

17 So can we all just sort of get along and figure  
18 out how we all can best serve our community?

19 Thank you.

20 MR. MARTIN: 11 through 16.

21 We've got Marie Owens, 11, Maria, Marie R.  
22 Owens, Dr. Karen Ratliff.

23 It looks like we need a few more. What's your  
24 name?

1 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: 13.

2 MR. MARTIN: 14 is out, 15, Violet Harper. 16,  
3 Sam Hill.

4 That was you, okay. Thank you, sir.

5 17, Joseph Butler.

6 Okay. Thank you.

7 MS. OWENS: Good evening. My name is Marie R.  
8 Owens. I serve as a leader of the community, on the  
9 local school council and director of Hirsch Student  
10 Council.

11 I've heard a lot today about how we all should  
12 get along and it's all about the kids, and I like my  
13 students.

14 And now a question. Why would CPS and the  
15 community at large continue to bid Hirsch to make bricks  
16 without straw? Because that's basically what you're  
17 doing when you rip and gut a program and fail to provide  
18 those who are providing the service the appropriate  
19 resources to complete a task.

20 I have no doubt that there are a few people  
21 from the state who have great and lovely goals for their  
22 people, but I have not heard one of them come in here  
23 and say what they are going to do to benefit Hirsch  
24 while they co-share this building.

1           And it's all good that you want to do those  
2 things for your children, and your children are valuable  
3 to you, but I want you all to know, my Hirsch children  
4 are valuable to me, and if you have the funds to put in  
5 another entire school that, by the way, has a maximum  
6 capacity to edge my children out, then I'm asking you,  
7 why don't you just give that money where it belongs,  
8 right here in this city school with an existing  
9 structure that has children with existing needs,  
10 because, remember, it's all about the children?

11           So it's not about a corporation building in  
12 that bottom line with CPS funds that my tax dollars  
13 paid. It's about using my dollars where I want them  
14 used. And I do not want them to fund a corporation. I  
15 want them to fund my children's future because,  
16 remember, it's all about the children.

17           Well, Hirsch children are the children that we  
18 need to be concerned about because this is their  
19 building, this is their future, this is their life, and  
20 they are not throw away children to be balked at and  
21 looked at as something to get past to get to where you  
22 want to go.

23           So since it's all about the children, let's  
24 truly put our money where our mouths are. We want

1 alternative learning, sir, we want all kinds of  
2 programs, Madams, please. Make it so.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. RATLIFF: Hi, Everyone. I'm Dr. Karen Ratliff.  
5 I am not only a previous resident of the Grand Crossing  
6 Community, I'm also a board member of the charter.

7 So I want to answer a couple of questions about  
8 where have you been, when have you arrived here. We  
9 have been here for several years at minimum.

10 Put our money where our mouth is? We've been  
11 there and done that, and we will continue to do that.  
12 \$181,000 was given to Hirsch in the past three years.

13 Where's the money? I don't know. We have  
14 never said no to any principal here in the past several  
15 years, whatever they've asked us, they received. So the  
16 money is where the mouth -- We have the money there.  
17 Where the money is, where the mouth is is right there.  
18 We've given it to you. Whatever you asked for, you  
19 received.

20 Computer labs, yep, we supported that.  
21 Renovational gyms, children in uniforms, we gave you  
22 that. Faculty and staff lunches, yep, we provided it.  
23 Again, the past seven years, we've never said no.

24 So the resources, you have it, we give it to

1 you. And that will not change.

2 I just want to say this one little piece. It  
3 is about the students. It's always been about this  
4 community as a whole.

5 Again, as a resident of the  
6 Grand Crossing Community, okay, I support, we support  
7 the students here, it's always been about the community,  
8 it always will be, it's always been about Hirsch  
9 students, and it will continue to be about the Hirsch  
10 students.

11 We have never said no, and we will continue not  
12 to ever say no to our students, the Grand Crossing  
13 community students.

14 So I want to make that perfectly clear,  
15 perfectly clear. Money, resources, you had it all,  
16 whatever they asked for, you received it. From where?  
17 The community, from the local church. And we've been  
18 here. We're not going anywhere. We will continue to  
19 support Hirsch.

20 Whatever the resources the AIM students will  
21 receive if we are approved to co-locate, the Hirsch  
22 students get the same thing. If they receive notebooks,  
23 you receive notebooks. If they receive laptops, you  
24 will receive laptops. Whatever it is, the resources



1 that will come in here, you will receive them.

2 It's been about the community, always has been,  
3 always will be and nothing will change.

4 MS. LONG: Hello, Everyone. My name is Mary Long.  
5 I'm a community partner here with Hirsch.

6 I facilitate a restorative justice class, and  
7 my heart is just broken right now, it's in a rather  
8 little pieces right now because you guys are fighting  
9 over our children. It's unbelievable that we are the  
10 church. The church? New Life?

11 On March 12th, 2012, my only child was killed  
12 one block from here, and God said that is not the last  
13 word, Mary.

14 I have been volunteering at this school since  
15 2012, and I got the same questions that the students  
16 have; where have you been, where are you when some  
17 student is walking the halls that had a rough day, where  
18 are you when the kids, someone comes to you and said  
19 that they're pregnant, where are you when the fights  
20 break out, where are you?

21 There's no one from New Life that walks these  
22 halls every day. And I'm saying that to say, if you  
23 threw some balance here or there, fine, but our children  
24 need us. Where are the mentors? Where are the tutors?

1 Why can't you come in and help be on what's already here  
2 and what's already established?

3 It broke my heart to listen to Marcus say  
4 what's going to happen to us. It broke my heart to hear  
5 the other students say so where do we go.

6 This time tonight we spent with us fighting.  
7 This time should be spent with us supporting each other.  
8 I don't even understand that. The same community, the  
9 same school, and we're fighting like cats and dogs  
10 because we want to put the haves on top and leave the  
11 have-nots.

12 And you know who's suffering? Our students,  
13 our children. They're hurting. Did you all hear the  
14 hurt in them? Is anybody even listening to them?

15 So the bottom line, what I have to say is, why  
16 haven't you been here all of this time that I've been  
17 here these last five years and helping me? I reached  
18 out to you all on several occasions. New Life, I've sat  
19 at the table with you, yes, I have, I've been reaching  
20 out; could you please come and mentor a kid, can you  
21 please come and walk a hall, and you please come into  
22 the lunchroom?

23 But I didn't get their response. So my  
24 question is; why can't we be all together and what's

1 already been established?

2 Thank you.

3 MS. HARPER: Good evening. My name is Videt Harper.  
4 I have three students that go here, two seniors and one  
5 junior. So I know how it is to be transitioned.

6 Bunch of lies. Bunch of lies. They promise  
7 they're going to do that, going to do to that. We're  
8 going through that right now at our school. They treat  
9 us all like scrap scrapers in our own school.

10 We can't -- We can't walk past them. They stop  
11 us like we are animals, like we're not here. But this  
12 is our school they've taken over. We can't use our gym  
13 room when we want to.

14 So I know how this is going with the  
15 transition, I've been here, and I refuse to let it go to  
16 the high school. I'm going to fight to the end with  
17 them.

18 MR. BENIFIELD: Good evening. My name is  
19 Dave Benifield, and I'm an Outreach worker for  
20 Cure Violence.

21 And one of the things we do in Outreach is we  
22 try to figure out what's going on with the community and  
23 social issues.

24 I honestly want to tell you all, we can't

1 figure out what is going on with social issues. See,  
2 there's too many closed door meetings with adults trying  
3 to figure out what's best for kids. You're not going to  
4 be able to do anything productive until you have the  
5 kids, I'll tell you.

6 You have no idea what's going on with these  
7 kids, their issues, what they deal with on a daily  
8 basis, what hinders them, what moves them, what kills  
9 them. You have to listen to the kids.

10 And all the in-house fighting about what's good  
11 for the kids, what's the best for the kids, what's so  
12 good for the kids, I fought for the fact where the kids  
13 come up to speak for themselves.

14 We had an opportunity to listen to one of the  
15 children who go to Hirsch, and she was eloquently in her  
16 speaking. She received a scholarship to go to another  
17 school, and she represented the kids of the school to  
18 the max. And we was able to get together and agree  
19 about what's best for the kids, and out of all these  
20 things we're doing, until we bring the kids to the table  
21 or have these meetings over and over again, and we'll be  
22 constantly misrepresenting the kids. Remember, this is  
23 about the kids.

24 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is Jessie Davis,

1 and I'm here from the University of UIC, and I represent  
2 Clear Violence.

3 Can I have all of the people from UIC, please,  
4 all stand in the back?

5 We started the program in this neighborhood,  
6 and the program that we started is a data-driven  
7 program, and the data in this community is very low with  
8 students that wanted to come here. We deal with a lot  
9 of high-risk teams that we talk to, and the problem with  
10 coming to this school is, you know, as the kids say,  
11 it's dry.

12 But I am also a member from the Grand Crossing  
13 area and Avalon as well. So once we get the children  
14 from this area to come in and see that it is something  
15 different, it is something new, that will be accepted,  
16 but to the kids that go here, please don't -- please,  
17 please don't think for one second you will be pushed out  
18 and the things that's for the new part won't be a part  
19 for you as well because they will be.

20 So if this is for the children, give it a try  
21 because you've tried a lot of other things, and those  
22 things haven't happened so you need to give this a try  
23 because sometimes or next time you won't be a part of  
24 process and it will just be what it is.

1 MR. BUTLER: Good evening. My name is  
2 Joseph Butler, and I'm a resident of the community.

3 And I've been a part of these processes before,  
4 and the reason I'm here tonight is because I heard about  
5 what was going on here, and I'm a little frustrated and  
6 a little concerned because the way the community has  
7 been involved and informed about the changes that are  
8 happening here at this school have not been as  
9 transparent as they could be. There needs to be more  
10 outreach and more engagement from the community.

11 One of the things that I did have an  
12 opportunity to do prior to coming here was I was at  
13 another meeting having this conversation, and I think  
14 people who were in that room, they were talking about  
15 the benefits of bringing AIM to Hirsch Elementary --  
16 High School and about the opportunities that they  
17 provide for the students here and how they could  
18 cohabitate and create a symbiotic relationship where  
19 both schools can strive.

20 I think that's important, but I think that that  
21 starts right now where we have the opportunity to start  
22 to bring, like Mr. Benifield just said, these young  
23 people into the room and they have an opportunity to  
24 have a conversation about what they think needs to

1     happen.

2             What I think what I heard this evening and even  
3     the -- even before now is that everybody is invested,  
4     everybody wants to see you all do as best as possible.

5             And I think what you said, Ms. Mary, earlier is  
6     important; that we start to put aside some of the  
7     fighting and the confusion between AIM and the community  
8     and Hirsch and everybody else and we start to figure out  
9     how we hold Chicago Public Schools accountable for  
10    what's happening at the school because I think you have  
11    an invested parter that's talking about coming and  
12    cohabiting you all, and you have strong student voices,  
13    strong parent voices and strong community members, and  
14    now is the opportunity for us to work together to  
15    leverage those voices.

16            The gentleman from CTU spoke about how -- like  
17    who's going to come and speak on behalf of different  
18    people, but the reality is we need to harness the power  
19    and the energy that we all have together and put  
20    pressure on the people making the decision.

21            It's not AIM. It's not people here at Hirsch.  
22    It's the Board of Education, and that's where the energy  
23    and the focus needs to be.

24            MR. MARTIN: Speakers 19 through 25, please, 19

1 through 25, David Vance.

2 MR. VANCE: Good evening. My name is David Vance.

3 And I know all about co-sharing charter  
4 schools, and you need to find out what's going on when  
5 they make these nice promises about how you're going to  
6 get what they get. You need to find out. You need to  
7 talk to the parents, the LSC, you need to talk to the  
8 parents at LSC at Bowen High School.

9 And I'm a community member at Bowen High  
10 School. We have suffered. They took the marquis down  
11 and trashed it. It took us three and a half years to  
12 get our name back.

13 No, they don't care about your school. They  
14 only care what's in it for them.

15 So I want to tell you, you fight them, you go  
16 all the way, you raise awareness in the neighborhood  
17 because they don't understand. Some people in the  
18 neighborhood are still asleep. I don't know why. You  
19 just look around.

20 So what happened at Bowen? They brought in  
21 charter schools. You're already surrounded by charter  
22 schools. Well, they brought in EPRA, and then they  
23 brought in Global, and they took half of our -- and they  
24 took our students. We had 1200. We was 300 now.



1           So it's not about the students. It's about  
2 what they want to do with them. It's not about you and  
3 your neighborhood. It's about what they can get out of  
4 your neighborhood.

5           So you need to hang on to your history because  
6 right now maybe that's all you've got. You've got the  
7 alumni. Where are they? And you need to organize, you  
8 need to go if they'll listen, but you need to keep  
9 trying because that's the only answer to get the  
10 neighborhood, to get the movement, to get the union, to  
11 get your parents, and don't let them take your school.

12          MS. ROBERTS: Good evening. My name is  
13 Keona Roberts, and I am a teacher at Distinctive  
14 Schools, but more importantly I am a parent. I am a  
15 parent of a young black boy.

16           And as we all know, our young black boys are  
17 struggling in the City of Chicago. And when I think of  
18 my son's education, the first word that comes to my mind  
19 is passion. I want him to be passionate about going to  
20 school. I want him to be passionate about the resources  
21 that he receives. I want him to be passionate about his  
22 future.

23           And I think that Distinctive and AIM strive to  
24 bring passionate back to our schools here in the

1 community.

2 Your students being able to have a say in what  
3 you are learning, have a say in what -- your  
4 extra-curricular activities, I think that Distinctive  
5 and AIM can bring that together.

6 It's not about pushing you out. It's not about  
7 taking over. It's more about collaborating and joining  
8 forces so that you can be the best student.

9 MS. BROWN: Good evening. My name is Yvonne Brown.  
10 I am a member of New Life 737 service. I am an educator  
11 at Distinctive Schools, founding member, and I have not  
12 had any scandal, and I do have a voice. So here I am  
13 today to talk to you why AIM would be a good fit for  
14 Hirsch.

15 I'm a mother. When I had to look for high  
16 schools for my students, I had to go outside of the  
17 community. Why should that not be a reason to go  
18 outside of the community? When we can have that  
19 resource right here.

20 When I heard about the school opening in the  
21 community, the first thing I did was I contacted whoever  
22 I needed to talk to about how can I be a part of this  
23 great program that's coming about. They're starting at  
24 seventh grade. Seventh grade is always a crucial year.

1 That's the year the students start to look at high  
2 school to try to figure out what they want to be, and I  
3 wanted to be a part of that program. They're going into  
4 twelfth grade, they're not trying to push anybody out.  
5 They want to join and be a partnership.

6 Having an arts-based focused curriculum is  
7 something that's going to keep our students connected  
8 with the schools. They have to have programs that  
9 they're interested in and want to be a part of, and AIM  
10 will make that happen.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. BANKS: Hello. My name is Ronald Banks, and I'm  
13 on the board for AIM.

14 First of all, before I start to talk or say  
15 anything, a lot of people kept saying they and we and  
16 what people are doing, and there's a lot of concern for  
17 Hirsch students asking questions.

18 I want to know what questions do you have so we  
19 can be very specific to answer those questions. So I'm  
20 going to yield my time but ask a question, and we'll  
21 answer.

22 Student, do you have a question? What is your  
23 question?

24 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Why are we just now

1 hearing from you?

3 MR. BANKS: Why are they just hearing from you?

4 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: To make sure that we  
5 are educated. Again, we've been here for -- When I say  
6 educated, educated on us being here. We've been here  
7 for seven years, again, faculty meetings, free  
8 counseling services, free legal services down the  
9 street. Again, we never said no to your principal,  
10 whatever you asked for, you got it.

11 So we just need to do a better job with  
12 educating you, and what we're doing for you, we've been  
13 here, and we're not going anywhere.

14 MR. BANKS: Any more questions?

15 Seven years. Did you know that?

16 Okay. Thank you.

17 Thanks.

18 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Who are you?

19 MR. BANKS: I'm Ronald Banks. I live in the  
20 community. I'm a business owner.

21 AIM sought me out about three years ago because  
22 they heard about my success and business, and they found  
23 out I lived in the community, and they asked me to be  
24 part of the board, and I've been a part of the board

1 ever since, and I've been communicating with them.  
2 We've just been waiting.

3 You know what happens is, in order to be  
4 successful, you have to be strategic. They asked for  
5 support.

6 What is your question, Ma'am?

7 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Who is AIM? What is  
8 it?

9 MR. BANKS: I'm going to sign up again.

10 We're going to answer your question, okay?

11 MR. MARTIN: Thank you.

12 Mr. Brunson followed by Phillip Bennett, Valena  
13 Miller, Jackie Kabir and Lasia McNeil.

14  
15 MR. BRUNSON: Hello, again.

16 I'll tell you, I stepped out a few times so I  
17 could be a little bit wrong and be off mark with this,  
18 but it seems like I notice more people speaking from  
19 Distinctive Schools than I do from names, and it's like  
20 I told you; everything goes up to the top.

21 Now, I will say they stepped up their game, put  
22 a little more play in it and a little more color in it,  
23 but it's still all about Distinctive Schools.

24 You know, I'm sorry, I just got to say this

1 because I hear this so much. You know, I've been -- I'm  
2 CTU. I've been in office since 2010. I've been in  
3 this -- I've seen this show for so many times of schools  
4 being shut down in our community and taking over our  
5 community, and always somebody comes in from CPS and  
6 says we're for the kids.

7 And every time I think about -- every time I  
8 hear that, I think, if animals could talk, the foxes  
9 would say -- or the rabbits and the wolves would say  
10 they work for the chief. That's what that reminds me  
11 of. I'm sorry. Okay. Yes.

12 But I had a question also. If AIM is so loving  
13 and caring and giving and they've been here doing it for  
14 seven years, why do you have to take over now? Why  
15 can't you just keep doing that? And if you love your  
16 students so much, why don't you ask them what they want,  
17 okay?

18 All right. Thank you.

19 MR. BENNETT: Good evening, Everyone. My name is  
20 Phillip Bennett. I'm also a member of this community.  
21 So I lived in this community.

22 The most important thing is I'm also a parent.  
23 So I have a 13-year-old, all right, and she will soon be  
24 transitioning to high school. So this concerns me.

1 Right now we travel very far to get resources  
2 to know that all students should have, all students  
3 should have available to them, okay?

4 With AIM being at this school, you know, I do  
5 feel that it -- what it does is it does open up this  
6 community to see new horizons, new things that are  
7 available and making things that happen.

8 So that's my input there.

9 MS. MILLER: Good evening. My name is  
10 Valena Miller, and I'm Miller Consulting Group. And I  
11 speak on behalf of a community person, not just a  
12 community person, but a teacher by profession, and I'm  
13 also a business owner, and also I'm a consultant.

14 And as I look around the room, sometimes we  
15 react so much with emotions but we don't always respond  
16 the way we should.

17 And when I look around this auditorium, and I'm  
18 thinking I'm not a product of Chicago, I was born and  
19 raised in Champaign, Illinois, and I'm wondering who sat  
20 in this very auditorium, who sat in these very seats,  
21 where are they now?

22 I think they might be judges somewhere. I  
23 think they might be teachers somewhere. I think they  
24 might be politicians somewhere. And I kind of think

1 they might kind of look like me and have my background.

2 And then I said, who else sat in here? Who  
3 else sat in this very room, who else?

4 I think a couple business owners must have sat  
5 in this auditorium sometime ten, 15, 20, 35.

6 I'm not getting ready to break out in song so  
7 I'll pull off of that.

8 Who else sat in this room? I think you've had  
9 some musicians come out of here. I think you've had  
10 some football players out of here. Should we call the  
11 basketball players out here? Did we get baseball  
12 players out of here? Did we get a couple of dancers out  
13 of here? Did we get some movie stars out of here? Did  
14 we get --

15 Everybody came out of this school, right?  
16 Right. Those are the kinds of people we want.

17 And as I think about it, I'm neither one side  
18 or the other, but I am on the right side. When I think  
19 about the right side ever, let me tell you, in case  
20 nobody told you all, I speak the truth, and that's the  
21 way I am, knock me off my thing, is that everybody is  
22 not going to college, but they are going to be a  
23 productive citizen, either they're going to be in the  
24 arts, they're going to be in crafts or they're going to



1 be a business owner, no matter what. So the choice is  
2 yours.

3 Don't be talking about it's all about the kids.  
4 Let's talk about the truth, okay? And we keep it and  
5 divide on it, okay?

6 Thank you for this moment.

7 MS. KABIR: Hello. My name is Jackie Kabir, and I'm  
8 coming to you speaking as a community member and as a  
9 parent.

10 You've heard a few other parents speak about  
11 raising kids in the community and having good options  
12 for their children.

13 And the one thing that most concerns me is that  
14 our good school choices are no longer in the community,  
15 and that's one of the reasons I'm supporting Arts in  
16 Motion being here in our community; because we don't  
17 have good community choices for our children.

18 I currently have three daughters, two in  
19 college and one that I'm currently raising, and I would  
20 like a good centrally located good school in this  
21 community for her when she gets to be that.

22 MS. McNEIL: Good evening. My name is  
23 Lasia McNeil. I am an educator at Distinctive Schools.

24 I know. I know. I know. We about to kick you

1 out of here is what you're saying. But it's not really  
2 true.

3 I'm not here to speak about the education part.  
4 I'm here to speak about my son in sixth grade and is  
5 looking for a school next year whether it's selective  
6 enrollment, art, or a private school.

7 A couple of things about my son. He loves to  
8 draw, he loves music, and he loves being around people  
9 that's similar to him and has the same drive.

10 A selective enrollment school may not be a  
11 possibility, but this could be a possibility for him  
12 with the arts and the drawings and things like that.

13 And that's what this school made me excited  
14 about; the education part of it but also the performing  
15 arts parts of it.

16 My son is in sports, he is in different other  
17 programs, and we have to go all the way up north. And  
18 when I get off work, I'm rushing in traffic to drive all  
19 the way there where this is an opportunity where I can  
20 just drive five or ten minutes from my house so that  
21 he's got to stay in the community to take him and be a  
22 part of something great.

23 You young ladies up here, you were talking  
24 about the mentoring and all of those things. My son

1 looks up to all high school students. His friends are  
2 in eighth grade. He's in sixth grade. He loves all of  
3 these things.

4 So for him to look up at you guys and be like I  
5 want to be like you, I want to continue to go to school  
6 and be like these young ladies and men trying to look  
7 for college and things like that, that's something  
8 great, and I think that's amazing.

9 And I know you have a question for me, but you  
10 can see me after, okay?

11 No problem.

12 MS. OWENS: Once again, Marie R. Owens from the  
13 local school council here at Hirsch as well as the  
14 stated community and director of student council.

15 I will be remiss if I not stand up here to  
16 debunk the lies that have been told to you because I  
17 don't want you to leave here with the impression that  
18 this organization has been here in the Hirsch structure  
19 for seven years. That's a lie. I'm going to call it  
20 what it is. It's not a mistruth. It's not a  
21 misstatement. It's a lie.

22 They have not been part of the administration.  
23 They have made payments in rent of \$170,000. That's  
24 rent. They can do that anywhere. That's not infusing

1 money into a specific program. I dare them to get up  
2 here and say what program they funded. I dare them to  
3 get up here and say that because that's a lie.

4 I dare them to say that they have been here  
5 walking the halls, dealing with children at Hirsch, not  
6 their own people, but participating in their programs  
7 while they're in this building. That's not being here  
8 for seven years. That's using a building for seven  
9 years.

10 If you were here, you'd be here for us, talking  
11 to Hirsch students, building things with Hirsch  
12 students, talking to Hirsch students, not the teachers  
13 that you want to bring in to build your program. That's  
14 not nice. And I'm sure you have a nice program. God  
15 bless you in your -- your position where you're going to  
16 take your children.

17 Again, can you bring it back to these children?  
18 Can we not act like these children don't exist? Can we  
19 deal with these children? These are real people, humans  
20 who have a life, who need the resources that would be  
21 used in their children's lives, in their own lives.

22 Yes, we can have all of those great things  
23 you're telling us right here at Hirsch, just where we  
24 need them, the goods what we need, the money that

1 they're going to give you.

2 So let's not give it to you. Let's give it to  
3 us. And I dare you, watch what we do when we have the  
4 right resources.

5 MR. MARTIN: The next speakers on deck, Terrence,  
6 CeCe.

7 And we're going to close out, the last speaker  
8 we have is Principal Varn.

9 So we've got Terrence, CeCe and Principal Varn.

10 Thank you, you all. I've received a  
11 correction. If you have not signed up, please make sure  
12 you sign in. The blue sheet is for the speakers.

13 We're here until 8:00 o'clock tonight so,  
14 Folks, if you've spoken, if you would like to speak  
15 again, please make sure you speak up, sign the sign-up  
16 sheet.

17 Reminder; your timekeeper is up front.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. BOONE: Good evening, my name is Terrence Boone.  
20 I'm an educator at Distinctive, and I was asked to come  
21 up to share with you guys.

22 I've been teaching 23 years, grew up in  
23 Englewood, 62nd and Stewart, across the street from  
24 Englewood High school, went to Dunbar, graduated from

1 Dunbar. I've been mentoring for 17 years at  
2 Trinity United Church of Christ. I also mentor at  
3 Distinctive.

4 I don't want to get into the politics, but I do  
5 want to say this. I worked with a lot of boys from the  
6 middle school and high school, and so I can speak from  
7 experience because they come to me with their problems.  
8 And my main primary concern are these young brothers.

9 If I would have had the opportunity to have  
10 a -- participate in the school of arts, it might have  
11 made a difference even though I did okay, but I see lots  
12 of young brothers that are diverse learners. I'm really  
13 academically strong in the arts and have helped them,  
14 and so to knock Distinctive and/or the Chicago Public  
15 Schools --

16 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Private school.

17 MR. BOONE: Well, to knock that down, I'm not here  
18 about that.

19 I'm here about providing a source for young  
20 men. And Grand Crossing probably could use a nice  
21 school of the arts. So I just hope you guys, everybody  
22 here, takes it into consideration.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. EDWARDS: Good evening, Everyone. I'm

1 CeCe Edwards, and I'm on the board of Park Manor, and  
2 I'm also the president of Grand Crossing Park Advisory  
3 Council Corporation, and I have been that for almost  
4 13 years, and I've volunteered my time in this area.

5 I have lived in this area since I was five  
6 years old. I have come to Hirsch High School, have seen  
7 at least a thousand students that used to go to  
8 Hirsch High School. I used to date some of the boys  
9 here because I went to a girls' school, and we used to  
10 come over here to date some of the boys, okay?

11 Now, Hirsch High School is a historic  
12 institution, Grand Crossing Park is a historic  
13 institution, however, my problem is this.

14 When it was time for parents to show up for  
15 some of the things that we have been fighting for, for  
16 the park, for our young people, nobody shows up.

17 When I sit here and I look at these young  
18 people, I'm the one that came over here and talked to  
19 the last principal you had, who was horrible, okay, and  
20 ran off everybody, okay, and now you got a good  
21 principal, Principal Varn, who has a vision, who is here  
22 to help, you got New Life Covenant, who I'm working with  
23 because they've been working with me, came to me, I  
24 didn't go to them, they came to me, I'm nobody, they

1 came to me to help me with the kids here at the park  
2 that come and go to Hirsch High School.

3 There was no field in that park, and there is  
4 one now because of New Life Covenant, the Grand Crossing  
5 Guidance Council and some of the people like Brad and  
6 other people that live in this community.

7 However, I'm still concerned because I don't  
8 see that many parents. This place should be packed with  
9 parents and other community people who are concerned  
10 about Hirsch High School, and I don't see it.

11 Now, AIM, Arts in Motion, has a plan. They are  
12 going to be a public charter, not a private charter.  
13 There's a difference. And, surely, you have to say what  
14 you want it to be like. But I think that if they would  
15 work, and I think that they will work with the young  
16 people here, I have worked with the young people here,  
17 I've worked with all the TC here, I have worked with the  
18 other principals here, I have worked with just about  
19 everybody I can and knocked on doors asking for parents  
20 and people to come and help our young people so  
21 they're not shot on the corners, okay, and not drugged  
22 down in the streets, and I think in our school here  
23 would be excellent, and to co-relate, not push out,  
24 co-relate, and I think we need to understand what



1 co-relate means and what push out means.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 MR. MARTIN: Ms. Chatuda, on deck, and  
4 Lawrence Crowley and Matthew Williams and Ms. Long,  
5 please make your way up to the stage.

6 And I remind you, Folks, if you would like to  
7 speak if you're compelled sitting in that seat, just  
8 feel free to go in the back and register. I do have  
9 blue sheets up front if you'd like to speak again.

10 MS. CHATUDA: Good evening. It's good to see all of  
11 you.

12 First of all, I want to say to Principal Varn  
13 thank you because my grandson came here from Iowa and  
14 was treated with kid gloves. So I want to say thank you  
15 for that. What a wonderful principal. What a wonderful  
16 staff here.

17 I'm a veteran teacher. In 2002 my school  
18 closed. I've been coming to these meetings for 17  
19 years, and as Harold Washington would say, it's the same  
20 old dodo.

21 We have got to stop this divide and fund our  
22 schools. There's not been that. That's Motion -- Arts  
23 in Motion school needs to do that. Hirsch cannot do it.  
24 Fund our school.

1           When I started, I was a music teacher. I  
2 became a science teacher because they wouldn't fund us.  
3 There's -- We have veteran teachers. You're dry. I  
4 don't want to say drying because I don't know where you  
5 got these people from. You have veteran teachers who  
6 are here who have taught for years who deserve better.

7           I know. I was one of those teachers, and I  
8 know what happened to our teachers should not have  
9 happened. These people are dedicated, these wonderful  
10 educators in our community, they come in here, they work  
11 in the worst conditions, they work with the most  
12 difficult kids, and this is how you repay them.

13           We cannot continue to do this. We cannot  
14 continue to be selfish. We are a community, students,  
15 parents, teachers. We're one. We cannot have this, CPS  
16 dividing us, making us fight like cats and dogs for  
17 nothing. Our community needs to be together, and we  
18 urge you to support Hirsch School.

19           I love Mr. Varn. I love the teachers. I  
20 just -- When I come in here, I have to thank you with  
21 gratitude because I got to benefit from the help you  
22 gave one of my own, and I thank you for that.

23           MR. WILLIAMS: Hello. My name is Matthew Williams.  
24 While I am from New Life, more importantly, I represent

1 artists, all right?

2 So let me just tell you a story. I have a  
3 young man who I mentored who is very talented who has  
4 been able to end up going to Kenwood High School for  
5 seventh grade and eighth grade because of academic  
6 enrichment, but because it didn't offer the interns an  
7 arts program, you then have to attend another high  
8 school.

9 So the high school that he's going to now is  
10 the Chicago Academy of Arts. That's a tuition-based  
11 school costing 32,000 a year. The only other school is  
12 Shine Art Center, which is on the west side. There are  
13 no performing arts high schools other than Dyer on the  
14 south side.

15 So as a artist, I believe our communities  
16 deserve more than one performing arts high school. I  
17 believe that the arts is on the cusp of being able to,  
18 literally, put young people to be able to have a voice  
19 in the political and social climate that we're in. The  
20 arts is the key.

21 So I guess my thing is that I don't want to  
22 limit the arts being brought into this community  
23 because, guess what, there are a lot of kids who are  
24 artistically gifted, and if they don't have the right

1 atmosphere to go get these gifts to be brought out,  
2 guess what, they go -- they basically go to waste, they  
3 end up going into other professions and end up being  
4 unsatisfied.

5 So my thing is, as an artist, wholeheartedly,  
6 as an artist, the arts deserve to be on the south side,  
7 from a high school perspective, other than just one high  
8 school, if they can have it on the north side and the  
9 south side, why can't we have that here on the south  
10 side?

11 I just caution you, it's not about what one  
12 school can do that the other can't, but it's what the  
13 arts school can do for our community. So I would say  
14 consider that among anything else, consider the arts.  
15 There are artists within this community who would tear  
16 down a wall to be able to work with people as artists  
17 within our communities. Give those people the  
18 opportunity as well.

19 MR. CROWLEY: How are you all doing? My name is  
20 Lawrence Crowley.

21 I think AIM actually be a really good program.  
22 I'm actually an artist myself. I actually grew up in  
23 Englewood, but at the same time, my mom actually moved  
24 over here, what was it like like seven years ago, and I

1 actually had to relocate to the south suburbs, but I  
2 came back out this way as I grew up, I actually started  
3 coming back towards this way.

4 I didn't actually stay in art school. I went  
5 into -- Criminal justice is something I actually went  
6 into, but my heart wasn't into it. So, basically, what  
7 I started doing is try to figure out what I wanted to do  
8 as I got older.

9 I'm definitely talented when it comes to art.  
10 I've been on the south side, actually diverse learning,  
11 an art school. Because you have a lot of types of kids  
12 out here that are actually into art, like generally into  
13 art, if they brought in another program, they're not  
14 actually into -- they're wasting their time basically.

15 That's all I have to say.

16 MS. LONG: Hello again. My name is Mary Long. I'm  
17 a community partner here.

18 I came into the school in 2012, like I said,  
19 volunteering. There was no one, there was no community  
20 partners. I begged New Life to come and help me. I  
21 begged them. I said, would you please come and put your  
22 arms around a student, could you please come and tell a  
23 young man to pull his pants up?

24 I mean, I'm really hurt. You know why? If

1 this was just the circle world, just the regular world,  
2 but this is the church, you all.

3 So my question is; if there are scandals on the  
4 table, why are we even here, why are -- why isn't that  
5 being investigated, CPS? If there's -- If there's  
6 unethical dealings that is going on with the same people  
7 that has ties to Barbara Byrd-Bennett, why are we here?  
8 I don't understand why we're here right now. And if we  
9 are going to be here, why are we here fighting?

10 So my question again is; New Life, where have  
11 you been for the five years that I've been here? Nobody  
12 worked side by side with me. Nobody greeted a student  
13 at the door with me. Did you greet at your church?  
14 Nobody opened the door. Nobody has since New Life has  
15 been here, and it's not because I have not reached out  
16 because I have, and I was lied to. I was lied to.

17 So that's what's sick right now, that's what  
18 hurts right now, that's what's sad right now is that  
19 we're talking about the church.

20 Well, you guys got to stop this that you want  
21 to walk on top of our church to get what you want  
22 because, if you care, you would come in and start  
23 building on what's already here, you will not come and  
24 be on top of them.

1           So my question is; can we support the school?  
2   Can you do that? Could you support Hirsch? Because you  
3   have not, you might have with your dollars, and that's  
4   another lie, you rented space for bible studies, you  
5   didn't come there and put the money into the school.

6           Thank you.

7           MR. MARTIN: Ms. Leonard, Adrienne Leonard, please.

8           MS. LEONARD: Good evening. Hi. How are you?

9           Charles is my friend. So I spoke last week,  
10   and just to let you know, to give you a little brief  
11   update on my actions over the past seven days, I have  
12   reached out to as many people as I have their personal  
13   contact information to do some one on ones doing a  
14   listening campaign, and it's not over.

15           I'm with you students. I believe in you. I  
16   believe in you. You deserve a chance, and I'm old  
17   school, but I'm a firm believer that, if it's for us and  
18   about us, we've got to be part of the process.

19           And I want to bring you to the table. I do  
20   have an invitation to visit local school council.  
21   Charles has called me and invited me, and I will be  
22   there because I want to hear what you have to say, and  
23   then we're going to figure out how to frame this thing  
24   up so we can get to the people that it really matters to

1 that can make a difference. Is that okay?

2 And then I think we need to have a focus group,  
3 all of you community folks and, you know, New Life,  
4 Distinctive, anybody, I don't care who you are, as long  
5 as you are breathing and you got breathe in your body, I  
6 don't talk to dead folks, and if they dead, they ought  
7 to be buried, I don't have time for that, but if you're  
8 alive and you want to be part of something that's going  
9 to keep it moving to make sure that your voice is heard,  
10 I have no children, but I have been fighting for all of  
11 you, and I need to teach that it's just not about me or  
12 you, but it's about your little sister, your little  
13 brother, it's about your children, those that are going  
14 to come behind you. We want the best for them, right?

15 And we can do that. Your voice matters, and  
16 it's very important. I'm Adrienne Leonard. I want to  
17 do a focus group, a small meeting, a listening campaign,  
18 and you can say whatever you want to say to me. We're  
19 going to figure out how to get it to the folks. And it  
20 matters to make a difference. Can we do that?

21 All right. So you know who I am. Come see me,  
22 and let's do it, all right?

23 MR. MARTIN: Now I'd like to ask Principal Varn to  
24 come to the stage, please, followed by, it looks like,



1 Shamauri Brown and Brian Mullins.

2 PRINCIPAL VARN: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

3 Good evening. My name is Larry Varn, and I am  
4 the proud principal of Hirsch High School.

5 You all come on up here, come on up here, come  
6 on because this is -- this is the moment, this is a  
7 position for you all, and that's what school is really  
8 about; it's about leaving these doors, having  
9 information and knowledge that you didn't have before  
10 you got here.

11 First of all, thank you to the deputy chief of  
12 the officer, also network support and to Mary Bradley,  
13 the -- and the officer of incubation and innovation.

14 I also want to recognize our ninth ward --  
15 representation representing the alderman of the eighth  
16 ward representation, Alderman Michelle Harris.

17 Yesterday we all celebrated Martin Luther King  
18 Day, and if nothing else that we can gain from  
19 Martin Luther King's life and legacy, it was his fight  
20 for equality.

21 Essentially, what we have here and what we're  
22 asking for at Hirsch is for equality; for the same  
23 opportunities to be available to you as are available  
24 not only to the potential students of AIM but to the

1 students on the north side, on the west side and all  
2 over Chicago who have opportunities, resources that you  
3 don't.

4           You've been robbed. Someone has taken your  
5 rights from you and have left you with nothing more than  
6 a basic education.

7           And I apologize to you because I feel bad, I  
8 feel bad every day that I walk in here and welcome you  
9 into a building where I know that the only thing I can  
10 give you is what you need to receive, a high school  
11 diploma, and nothing more. That's all I can give you  
12 is -- is just that. And I'm sorry that I can't give you  
13 any more. I want to be able to give you more than that.  
14 You deserve to have more than that.

15           But I want you to know that you heard us talk  
16 about Hirsch. Hirsch wasn't always like this. Hirsch  
17 has not always been at this level of destitute,  
18 desperate, bottom of the barrel educational  
19 opportunities.

20           However, with the opening of charter schools  
21 and selective schools, with more school choice, which  
22 much has suffered, let me give you an analogy, all  
23 right?

24           Rent. You all -- Have you all -- Your parents

1 maybe have paid rent, right? When you live in an  
2 apartment or an apartment building, you pay rent.

3 Now, I do love you very much, however, you  
4 can't lie and slander our relationship. Hirsch offers  
5 you a building where you pay rent. When you pay rent to  
6 your landlord, that is not a donation to them of  
7 support. That is paying for their services. I do  
8 appreciate that. I really do. I really do appreciate  
9 that because of your residence that you've taken here at  
10 Hirsch, you have filled in the gap where Chicago Public  
11 Schools has failed us.

12 So I appreciate the \$180,000 that you've given  
13 us over the years, over the three years that I've been  
14 here. But over three years of \$180 when it comes to a  
15 school is nothing. At the end of the day, it's a  
16 business. Nothing is nothing. I can't give these  
17 children another position or another teacher for what  
18 you've given us over the last three years.

19 Right, you have not said no to us, but when you  
20 got your -- when -- the first time when the charter  
21 proposal didn't go through, I came to you, and I said,  
22 let's partner, I can't give my kids the arts. You all  
23 want to go to arts school. Why don't you all give us  
24 the arts, please? I'll take care of the academic

1 pieces, and we'll have all have what we need.

2 You didn't say no. No, you didn't say no. You  
3 didn't say anything at all.

4 Now, that's okay because that's not your  
5 responsibility. That is not New Life's responsibility.

6 Who I am holding accountable for where Hirsch  
7 is now is who allowed Hirsch to get here over the course  
8 of the years. You see, back to the rent analogy. Just  
9 because the tenants, in Apartment 3, have big screen  
10 T.V.s, brand new furniture, outstanding Wi-Fi services  
11 and everything else doesn't mean that the tenants in  
12 Apartment 1A have those same things.

13 What I'm saying is we go back to Martin Luther  
14 King that we have true equality, and what CPS is saying  
15 to me in black and white is that they will not, they  
16 will not give Hirsch any capital funds towards the  
17 co-location. So what that means is that those tenants,  
18 AIM, will have great and wonderful things, and not here,  
19 the people who I work for, the people who we are a part  
20 of.

21 See, AIM is a part of a same school system,  
22 Distinctive Schools. So Distinctive Schools should take  
23 care of that. Hirsch is a part of CPS. So CPS should  
24 take care of Hirsch. But CPS has said that they're not

1 giving you anything else.

2 So where in CPS has the charter worked, a  
3 co-location really worked in a high school? It's the  
4 question I've asked over and over and over to many, many  
5 people and have not received a solid answer around it.

6 And I am here to say that perhaps maybe there's  
7 a chance that this could be the model where co-location  
8 between the charter school and a neighborhood high  
9 school works, but there must be the proper investment in  
10 both schools.

11 You see, Hirsch at some point in time got sick.  
12 Our buyers dropped, the academics became to fell, the  
13 level of the school began to come down. We were under  
14 CPS. Hirsch began to hemorrhage and bleed out students.  
15 They were fleeing from the building. And we were under  
16 CPS.

17 Now Hirsch is on life support, struggling to  
18 survive, barely making it. And if nothing is done to  
19 Hirsch, then we will ultimately die.

20 So I'm not standing here to you today saying  
21 that a co-location is not what's right for you, but if  
22 AIM has honors classes, that doesn't give Hirsch  
23 students honors classes, if AIM has arts classes, that  
24 doesn't mean that you can go across the hall and dance

1 in their classes and get credit for that, that does not  
2 mean that the opportunities that they have you'll have  
3 because we are, unfortunately a part of CPS, which is  
4 government by policies and procedures.

5 So our world, our fight, our fight is with who  
6 we are a part of, who should be taking care of us. Our  
7 fight is with our primary care physician who has allowed  
8 us to get sick, allowed our buyers to drop, allowed us  
9 to bleed out and left us on life support.

10 CPS, what I'm asking for you to do is to heal  
11 our school, make our school better, put us back where we  
12 can be where we once were so that we could have those  
13 opportunities.

14 Before-school activities, that's great.  
15 After-school activities are great. Smoothies in the  
16 morning are great. But what matters the most for these  
17 students up here is what happens when the first bell  
18 rings in the morning and the last bell rings at night,  
19 and AIM can't do anything to help us with that.

20 We appreciate that we know you're all trying.  
21 We know that you have good intentions. CPS, where are  
22 you, where's our dollar? We are calling for an  
23 emergency situation here at Hirsch before our time runs  
24 out. Give us what we need so that we can survive and

1 don't create -- and don't create a school of inequality  
2 with some students going to classes that have multiple  
3 levels of honors, AP, advanced placement, dual credit  
4 and Hirsch continues to just get what you need to  
5 graduate from high school.

6 Thank you so much.

7 MR. MARTIN: I have a blue folder up here I'm going  
8 to return to the back registration table if somebody  
9 lost a folder. It's a blue folder.

10 So we've got Brown, Mr. Mullins, and we've got  
11 an additional speaker Jin-Soo Huh.

12 If you can make your way down to the front,  
13 please.

14 MR. BROWN: Good evening, Everyone. I just want to  
15 start off by everyone knows my name is Shamauri Brown,  
16 and I am a member of New Life Covenant Church, but I'm  
17 also a servant of this community.

18 And one of the things that I want to say up  
19 front is I have attained and walked the halls of Hirsch  
20 High School. I've mentored ten ninth graders in that  
21 take the mural in the hallway that says believe, and,  
22 actually, a result of me spending months with those  
23 students, talking with them about their personal  
24 problems, and they came up with the idea to put believe

1 in the hallway, and it's the only mural that is in  
2 Hirsch High School. So we have reached out, and we have  
3 helped.

4 But like I said last week, when change is  
5 coming, the environment gets tight. Can everybody feel  
6 their heart tensed up? Can you feel the rigidity in the  
7 air?

8 Well, what that means is that change is on the  
9 horizon. This is not about whether or not what Hirsch  
10 students is getting or what they're not getting. This  
11 is a simple request for co-location.

12 And, Principal Varn, you said something really  
13 key. Our intentions are good, and it's a matter of the  
14 heart. We are offering co-location with an idea to  
15 bring resources to the school. And you did make -- you  
16 did make a statement to CPS, but what I'm saying is that  
17 this is all about a request about co-location. It's not  
18 about nothing else. It's about co-location.

19 And if this is not the location that we are  
20 going to be a co-location at, Arts in Motion School is  
21 still going to Grand Crossing community, and students  
22 are still going to have an opportunity to get  
23 specialized education.

24 And I worked with those ten guys, and it



1 unified them. They wrote believe on there, and the art  
2 brought them together. So art has that type of ability  
3 to unify the kids.

4 So with that being said, the main thing is this  
5 is just a request for co-location, and if that request  
6 is denied, New Life Covenant Church Southeast will still  
7 be a church. Let's not mystify the church because a lot  
8 of you all have been slandering Jesus Christ.

9 Jesus Christ is the church. So when you're talking  
10 about the church, you're talking about his entity.

11 And there is a lot of unrealistics and myths  
12 that people are saying about what the church can do and  
13 what the church cannot do. Our job is to literally  
14 provide an atmosphere for people to have an encounter  
15 with Jesus Christ and to be transformed by the renewing  
16 of their minds. That's what the church is supposed to  
17 do. Then once you get out of that pew, you come into  
18 the community and act like you got Jesus in you, and  
19 that involves love, that involves patience, that  
20 involves kindness. So what's what the church is  
21 supposed to do. That's what the church is supposed to  
22 do.

23 So as it relates to co-location, it's just a  
24 mere request, and if that request is denied, a charter

1 school will come to Greater Grant Crossing.

2 MR. MULLINS: Good afternoon. My name is  
3 Brian Mullins. I am a life-long community member here,  
4 and I am against the co-location of this school.

5 We can sit up in here and go back and forth all  
6 day. We can hear all this again coming from the people  
7 from the charter school and want the school to take  
8 place here.

9 But we know this is part of a larger scheme of  
10 things that's been happening in Chicago. Rahm Emanuel  
11 and CPS has been closing 270 schools, I believe  
12 including Mayor Daley, in our communities over the last  
13 ten years. So this move they're making now, of course,  
14 will lead to closing down Hirsch High School and taking  
15 it over. It's not a secret, and we shouldn't even act  
16 like it is. I think we're doing everybody a disservice.

17 The gentleman before me, he talked about  
18 New Life and what New Life does as far as Jesus is  
19 concerned. I think we should let New Life handle Jesus  
20 and let Hirsch handle education in our community.  
21 Churches have come into communities in Chicago who are  
22 connected to Rahm Emanuel and CPS, the same exact  
23 formula, all black communities on the south and west  
24 sides of Chicago. This is no different, and it's going

1 to take place.

2 So, again, I'm against it completely, and I  
3 stand -- I believe everyone should look at what it's  
4 doing to our community on a larger scale. It's just not  
5 about the buildings. It's about the greater time  
6 initiative before, which is the mayor's decision to  
7 add -- they always bring other people into our  
8 communities. It always starts with arts programs first.  
9 That's the sign of gentrification and moving toward the  
10 last black people out of the community. Don't be  
11 fooled.

12 You see a lot of white people in this room  
13 right now. They're not here because they decided they  
14 want to love all these kids here. There's something  
15 behind it all. They come in, and they take over.

16 We can educate our kids ourselves, and so,  
17 again, I'm against this.

18 MR. HUH: Hi. My name is Jin-Soo Huh, and I'm a  
19 proud educator. So I'm here for the Grant Crossing  
20 community.

21 When I think about education and what's been  
22 going for a long time in the world, it's rapidly  
23 changed. Our schools need to be caught up to meet this  
24 change.

1           If you look at schools right now, there are so  
2 many that still have 30 chairs and one room teaching.  
3 One student is sitting there bored out of his mind  
4 because he learned it last year, and the other student  
5 is absent last week because he's behind and doesn't know  
6 what's going on in classes, he's going to keep falling  
7 behind. There is a tiny sliver of students who are  
8 getting that education.

9           So, personally, what I want AIM to do is try to  
10 meet every single student at their level. This isn't  
11 just about their reading. This isn't just about their  
12 math level. It's where they are socioeconomically, it's  
13 about where they are socioemotionally, it's about their  
14 backgrounds and everything. It's about our students  
15 learning and driving them on learning.

16           We've heard a lot about with asking for people  
17 to be at AIM. At similar schools at other places like  
18 AIM, what they're aiming to do is that students are  
19 driving lessons, and it's not a top down from the  
20 teacher feeding something to the student. The student's  
21 curiosity is really blooming.

22           We heard earlier from someone talking about  
23 passion, wanting their children to have passion. We  
24 can't tap into it unless we ask what that passion is,

1 where you want to go, where their interest lies, and,  
2 also, people don't even know what their passions are.

3 I think, oftentimes at school, when I was  
4 there, I was just like the teacher is telling me to do  
5 this so I'm going to learn it. What do you care about?  
6 What are you interested in? Where do you want to go?

7 Personally, AIM students think in a sense that  
8 they're driving it and reflecting on their learning,  
9 they're placing a world and driving it.

10 The arts are a proper way to tap into this as  
11 well. I'm really excited that AIM has the ability to  
12 tie in art. And personally I'm going with my common  
13 knowledge. I'll also say that it's common knowledge  
14 extremely arts is important.

15 One thing that I'm excited about that I've seen  
16 in this proposal is the ability to instill in students  
17 not just constant knowledge but having the success to be  
18 able to navigate in this world. That's going to be more  
19 critical for our students in the future than ever  
20 before. They're going to need to know how to navigate,  
21 be flexible because the world is constantly changing. I  
22 can't tell you what jobs they're taking in years. I  
23 just know students will need to be prepared for it.

24 Thank you.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry. Two minutes  
2 wasn't enough.

3 But the reason why I get to speak again is  
4 because I am the co-chair of CPS Community Action  
5 Council. I have an organization Chicago Alliance  
6 Suburban School Educators and Teach for the Future  
7 Incorporated.

8 As I said, since 1987 I've been involved as a  
9 parent, a grandparent, a teacher, a union organizer, a  
10 community organizer, and my latest endeavor is that I've  
11 written a book about this education process.

12 What I want you to know is that all research  
13 says that charters, there's no difference, no charter  
14 schools, all the research, are providing any better  
15 academic environment for our students. That's a lie.  
16 It just didn't happen. It hasn't happened in 20 years.

17 The University of Chicago consortium says so.  
18 Every research report says the only difference in what  
19 the charters have brought is the color of the teachers  
20 teaching. There are 130,000 African-American teachers  
21 terminated as a result of the proliferation of charter  
22 schools. There are ten thousand here in Chicago.

23 And you're bringing in all these other people  
24 who are not certified, don't be fooled, they haven't

1 gone through the vetting process that we had to go  
2 through, they haven't recertified, they haven't  
3 certified, they do not have the credentials to stand  
4 behind or before our children, and that's the honest to  
5 goodness truth.

6 And the fact is this; they are not succeeding.  
7 So we can have a nice building, but what we need to do  
8 is fund Hirsch.

9 I'm a musician. All my children are musicians.  
10 I was the chair at Kenwood for ten years raising money.  
11 They will not fund music. Music can be the heart

12 As the principal said, join, join it, support  
13 it, bring your program here, but don't take the  
14 academics, don't take the school because it's union  
15 organized.

16 I saw how you took schools when a charter came;  
17 public school kids on one side, private on the other,  
18 charter, division. We cannot allow this division to  
19 keep taking place. Support our schools, make us whole,  
20 make our community whole, support the principal, support  
21 the teachers, and then you will see change and demand  
22 that CPS fund us, demand that they fund these beautiful  
23 children here.

24 Thank you.

1 MR. MARTIN: Mr. Axintunde?

2 MR. AXINTUNDE: How you all doing? It's kind of hot  
3 in here so I could tell some people are falling asleep.  
4 How you all doing? How you all doing?

5 Okay. Okay. Are we awake a little bit? I  
6 love you. We've been going through a lot of stress  
7 today, I guess. I'm exhausted. I had a long day at  
8 work.

9 So to come here again, and I was here last  
10 week, for some of you who weren't here last week, I just  
11 invite everyone to just be a little curious. Right? We  
12 want to be curious what does this mean about opening up  
13 a charter school, co-locating, co-relating, all of that  
14 stuff, right? What does that mean?

15 The best we can do is educate ourselves on what  
16 that means. We've had a bunch of people come up here on  
17 one side of the fence or another sharing what it means  
18 to them, sharing what it doesn't mean.

19 We put God in the conversation. We've been  
20 doing all of that. So when we think about it  
21 personally, where do you stand about it? Have you gone  
22 to the other side and checked in to see what it looks  
23 like? Have any of you done that work.

24 For the folks who were here last week, if you



1 have, raise your hand so I can tell.

2 So if you haven't even done that work --

3 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I checked it out.

4 MR. AXINTUNDE: Okay. So you checked it out.

5 Some of you haven't done that work yet. So  
6 before we even get into making a concrete decision,  
7 right, because if you go to the store or you want to buy  
8 a car, you don't buy the first thing you see, you do  
9 your homework, right, you shop around, ask the other  
10 people's opinions, and then you formalize your own  
11 opinion.

12 So, again, I just want to invite everybody,  
13 before you go ahead and say that this is bad and wrong  
14 or this is great, go check in on the other side and find  
15 out what could be the possibility if we actually  
16 co-located and we actually shared resources.

17 What does that look like? What type of  
18 resources? Let's get into the knitty-gritty of what  
19 types of resources are you going to share. Could  
20 students go from one class to another? Could my  
21 students keep the parents in the rooms? Could these  
22 students actually elevate their knowledge because  
23 they're sharing students from a different place? What's  
24 wrong with that?

1           So, again, I'd just invite everybody to be  
2           curious, don't rest on your own like this is the only  
3           decision. You know, really take the opportunity.

4           One of the things that's great about being an  
5           American is the fact that we get choice. If you're in  
6           China or, you know, Russia, you might not necessarily  
7           get a choice. So take the opportunity and go and check  
8           in on the other side of the yard and really get the  
9           truth about what it is.

10          You guys up for that?

11          Some people are no. Some people are yes.

12          I appreciate that.

13          MR. MARTIN: There's approximately ten minutes left  
14          unless my clock is a little fast.

15          We have no more speakers signed up. I invite  
16          anybody who would like to speak, please take the time to  
17          come to the front stage. If you'd like to make a  
18          closing point, there's still two minutes.

19          MS. SAFFOLD: And in event you don't want to speak  
20          this evening, you still are welcome to come up and you  
21          can voice your concerns to transitions.cps.edu. Again,  
22          there's someone in the back over there for the next  
23          30 minutes after we leave. The court reporter will not  
24          be there.

1           If you come up, please state your first, last  
2     name and affiliation with Hirsch, and, again, if you  
3     have other questions or comments and you don't want to  
4     make them here this evening, you can e-mail us at  
5     transitions.cps.edu, transitions.cps.edu, but we do  
6     welcome you to come up at this time.

7           Thank you.

8           We still have time if you're willing or you're  
9     interested in coming up, we still have time available.  
10    If not, you can e-mail your concerns to  
11    transitions@cps.edu, but we do have the floor open and  
12    we do have until 8:00 o'clock to hear, answer any -- to  
13    hear your concerns.

14          Thank you for coming out. We still have the  
15    floor open in case you have any concerns. We have nine  
16    minutes. Please feel free to come up to the front.

17          Thank you.

18          Good evening. Again, if you're interested in  
19    making any comments that you have not had an opportunity  
20    to do so this evening, you can e-mail your comments to  
21    CPS transitions.cps.edu, transitions.cps.edu. Again,  
22    there's someone in the back in case you want to get a  
23    card to write down that e-mail address,  
24    transitions.cps.edu. Thank you.

1           Thank you. It is now 8:00 o'clock. Our  
2 session is ended.

3           Thank you so much.

4           (Whereupon, the above-entitled cause  
5 concluded at 8:00 o'clock p.m.)  
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
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3 COUNTY OF C O O K )  
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6

7 ROBBIN M. OCHENKOWSKI, being first duly sworn,  
8 deposes and says that she is a Certified Shorthand  
9 Reporter in Cook County, Illinois;

10 That she reported in shorthand and thereafter  
11 transcribed the foregoing;

12 That the within and foregoing transcript is  
13 true, accurate and complete and contains all the  
14 evidence which was received and the proceedings had upon  
15 the within cause.  
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